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Eastern Illinois University

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# Mentor Program empowers new faculty

**By Kaitlyn Lonkar**

Staff Reporter

The Faculty Mentoring Circles Connection program met in the Effingham Room of the Martin Luther King Jr. University Union to discuss the best practices for mentoring.

This program has helped new faculty adjust to Eastern.

"I wish this program was in effect when I first came here," said Deb Wolf, physical education department member.

The purpose of the meeting was to affirm or redirect the mentoring program and to acknowledge the mentor competencies that best serve the relationships with mentees over the remaining months.

The mentors suggested that the mentees assess the past semester and their relationship with their mentor. The mentees should mention if

there was something they needed help in but were too shy to ask.

"Mentoring is so critical," said Mildred Pearson, director of Faculty Development.

The mentees learn through trial and error, and all of these competencies make sense, she said.

"Some of the things we do in education, teaching or mentoring are better than good," Pearson said. "We want to move mentees to the next level and find the best practices."

All of the mentors were asked to do a self-evaluation on their competency in supporting, challenging, empowerment, path finding, double looping and managed learning.

Competency in all of these areas are what makes a good mentor, and much of the time spent was talking about the support, empowerment and path finding of the mentees.

The mentees are the ones who

drive the process and set goals and challenges for themselves instead of the mentors.

"I don't feel it is my place," Wolf said.

It is so early in the year to start challenging them because they have so many challenges already, she added.

"Encouragement and validation are things the mentee needs," Wolf said. "They need to know that they are doing a good job so they don't feel like they are spinning their wheels."

The most critical part of being a mentor is listening.

Wolf wants the mentees to realize they are not alone and their mentor is a friend that they can reach out to.

All of the mentors in attendance agreed that empowerment goes hand in hand with support.

"Sometimes we all empower each other by supporting," Wolf said.